

# Montana State Senate



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*The Big Sky Country*

February 18, 2011

EXHIBIT 9  
DATE Feb 21, 2011  
HB 375

COMMITTEES:  
FINANCE AND CLAIMS  
HUMAN SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE  
TRANSPORTATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
RULES

TO: Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long-Range Planning

FROM: David E. Wanzenried

SUBJECT: Effects of House Bill 375 on programs within the Department of Military Affairs

I understand the Joint Appropriations Committee Long-Range Planning Subcommittee will meet on Monday, February 21, 2011, to discuss House Bill, 375. The meeting provides an opportunity to evaluate the effect of the 10 percent funding reductions contained in the bill on an array of state special revenue accounts.

As member of the General Government (Section A) Subcommittee, I listened to testimony about impacts on fund balances if the proposals in House Bill 375 are approved. I am writing to express my concerns about the consequences of leaving certain provisions of that legislation in place.

House Bill 375 seeks to take 10 percent of the balance in state special revenue accounts within the Department of Military Affairs (Account numbers 02214-Veterans Affairs Cemeteries; 02548-Veterans Affairs; and 02170-Search and Rescue Disaster and Emergency Off-Road Vehicle).

If the reductions are approved, these accounts would be over appropriated.

The Veterans Affairs program may be forced to close the Veterans Cemetery in Miles City. A federal grant in the amount of \$1.4 million helped the State of Montana offset the costs of establishing this facility. The premise was that the facility would remain open. There could be severe consequences if the cemetery closes and the funding stipulations are not fulfilled.

The Veterans Affairs account assists in funding the veterans' service program. The 5 percent global motion already reduced the Outreach program. House Bill 375 would reduce this program further.

The Search and Rescue, Disaster and Emergency Off-Road Vehicle Account reimburses local search and rescue units for mission, training and equipment costs. A reduction in this account would result in reductions to the local search and rescue units.

Thousands of Montana service men and women sacrificed a great deal to serve and protect our country. The programs adversely affected by the proposal are comparatively inexpensive expressions of gratitude for those deeds.

As you review and discuss House Bill 375, I respectfully request that you keep those sacrifices and contributions in mind.